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ABSTRACT

Studies of elementary school social studies since the late 1970s, largely from an objective-quantitative perspective, have painted a dire picture but have paid little attention to what teachers are actually doing in the classroom. Researchers have found that little instructional time is spent on social studies, that the textbooks on this subject are severely lacking, that teachers seem uncertain about what should be taught, and that students lack enthusiasm for the subject. However, one must be cautious about over generalizing. There is great variability among teachers, and social studies instruction is sometimes excellent. It is likely that surveys underestimate the amount of time devoted to social studies as materials used for language arts, reading, music, and art often incorporate social studies content and concepts. When considering priorities, without a firm foundation in reading and writing, learning in social studies is impeded, and mathematical skills are essential for functioning in modern society. Therefore attention to reading, writing, and mathematics at the expense of social studies is understandable. More research from an interpretive-qualitative perspective is needed to help construct a more meaningful characterization of what goes on in classrooms, especially what students are thinking and how they are reacting. The ultimate concern must be with student outcomes. A 51-item bibliography is included. (JB)

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WHAT IS KNOWN ABOUT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL SOCIAL STUDIES?

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Paper presented at a symposium, What Finds Its Way Into Elementary School Social Studies Curricula and Why?, at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Francisco, March 28, 1989.

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As editor of the forthcoming Handbook of Research on Social Studies, I was in hopes that by this time, having read at least initial drafts of all of the chapters, I would be well-informed about elementary school social studies. As a matter of fact, I have not learned very much from the Handbook that I did not know before. The lack of informativeness may be in part due to the way the Handbook was constituted. That is, no author was asked specifically to address the question, what goes on in elementary school social studies? As might be expected, the focus of most authors has not been on what goes on in social studies—elementary or secondary—but on what does research indicate might be more effective ways to teach social studies and what research is needed to determine how to teach social studies more effectively.

How to improve education, of course, tends to be the emphasis of educational researchers. As Jackson and Kieslar (1977) pointed out, educational researchers are almost totally absorbed with discovering better techniques and improving practice. Little attention is paid to what teachers are doing and, in particular, to what they are doing that might be appropriate, given the conditions within which they teach. It was not surprising, then, that in addition to the general lack of information in the preliminary Handbook manuscripts, a perusal of Theory and Research in Social Education yielded only one study (Herman, 1977) of teaching in elementary social studies.

Time on Social Studies

Much of what can be said about elementary school social studies will not, therefore, be of a great surprise to those familiar with the recurring laments about what happens, or what does not happen, in elementary-level classrooms. Considerable attention has been directed to the amount of time allocated to

social studies instruction. There is, for example, Gross' disturbed report in 1977 that social studies was being allotted less instructional time in elementary schools, especially in the primary grades, as teachers devoted more of their efforts to the basics of reading, writing, and arithmetic. Gross noted two Colorado districts in which it was reported that elementary teachers averaged only one hour per week on social studies. He also cited studies in Florida that indicated that less than half of the K-5 teachers even taught social studies regularly (p. 198).

There was little in the six case studies edited by John Jarolimek (1977) that same year to dispute Gross' observations. In San Antonio elementary schools, according to Diem (1977), social studies was used as a "filler subject" (p. 596), although a sign of progress was the adoption of social studies textbooks for grades 1-3. Branson (1977) reported that an elementary school administrator in Marin County told her that "in the primary grades, social studies is taught only about twice a week--perhaps two half-hour lessons" (p. 594), with somewhat more attention in the upper elementary grades. Huber (1977) and Ort (1977), however, observed somewhat increased attention to social studies in "mid-America" and Birmingham, Alabama, respectively, with the state course of study for social studies apparently having an influence in Alabama. In Boston, Lahnston and Nevins (1977) reported a mixed situation: While "some teachers, many of whom have limited backgrounds in social studies, avoid its implementation and even refused to talk [to the authors] about social studies . . . other teachers make concerted efforts to offer pupils social studies instruction using many of the more recent trends . . . [especially at] the grade 4 and 5 levels" (p. 583).

In 1978, Weiss (p. 51) reported the results of a nationwide National Science Foundation-sponsored survey that indicated low instructional time for elementary social studies, but somewhat more than that claimed by Gross. Data were available from 467 teachers at the K-3 level. They reported spending an average (mean) of 21 minutes a day (about 1.8 hours per week) on social studies, as contrasted with an average of 95 minutes a day (7.9 hours per week) on reading and 41 minutes per day (3.4 hours per week) on mathematics. At the grades 4-6 level, 302 teachers in self-contained classrooms reported an average of 34 minutes per day (2.8 hours per week) on social studies. In comparison, they reported averages of 66 minutes a day (5.5 hours per week) on reading and 51 minutes per day (4.35 hours per week) on mathematics. For all grades combined, the mean number of reported minutes per day on social studies was 25 (2.1 hours per week) as contrasted with 86 minutes per day (7.2 hours a week) and 44 minutes per day (3.7 hours per week) for reading and mathematics, respectively. (At both the K-3 and 4-6 levels, science received the least attention--17 and 28 minutes per day, respectively.)

Hahn (1985), in an effort to determine whether the conclusions of Gross (1977) and of Shaver, Davis, Helburn (1979, 1980), based in part on Weiss' (1978) data, were still valid, sent a questionnaire to a member of the National Council for the Social Studies' Council of State Social Studies Specialists in each state. The responses from 22 states "confirmed a continuing decline" (p. 222), with three respondents indicating that the decline was especially noticeable in the primary grades; 18 respondents estimated that the time devoted to social studies was still at about the 1975 level reported by Gross; and the responses from only six states indicated some increase in allocations of time to elementary school social studies. Not surprisingly, Hahn (1985) concluded that materials

from the New Social Studies, which were never widely implemented in the classroom, were only in slight use by 1983, especially in elementary social studies. She concluded "that the era of 'the new social studies', at least as manifested by Project Social Studies materials, has passed" (p. 221).

One year prior to Hahn's report, Goodlad (1984), in A Place Called School, had confirmed what he referred to as the "disturbing situation" in elementary social studies. He concluded that given the time devoted to language arts and mathematics, social studies was "seriously shortchanged" in many schools (p. 198). His sample of 65 "early elementary" teachers from 13 communities in 7 states across the country reported an average of 2.1 hours of instruction per week in social studies, while his 59 "upper elementary" teachers reported an average of 3.3 hours of instruction per week. These figures were in contrast to 8.5 hours reported for English and language arts instruction and 4.7 hours reported for mathematics instruction at the early elementary level, and 7.4 hours and 5.1 hours reported for each at the upper elementary level.

A survey conducted by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) produced similar results (Cawelti & Adkisson, 1985). A sample of 1522 elementary school principals (a 38% return of a random sample of 4000 principals) reported that teachers spend about 2.8 hours per week on social studies (although one must wonder about the validity of principals' reports of classroom instructional time). The findings across the various studies are remarkably consistent (see Table 1).

Insert Table 1 about here

Sandwiched between the various studies noted above was the report of the Case Studies in Science Education (CSSE) project (Stake & Easley, 1978). Along with Weiss' (1978) national survey and a research review by Wiley (1977), the CSSE project was sponsored by the National Science Foundation in an effort to determine the status of science, mathematics, and social science (social studies) education in the public schools. An interpretive report of the three NSF studies prepared by O. L. Davis, Sue Helburn, and me (1980) has been widely cited—perhaps unfortunately, because the original reports appear to have been rarely read, and they are rich in meaning beyond what we could convey in our brief, by stipulation, reports, especially the executive summary published in Social Education (Shaver, Davis, & Helburn, 1979).

Comments by the field observers for the 10 sites of the CSSE case studies confirmed the picture painted above. For example, Mary Lee Smith (1978) reported that in a small city in Colorado, a teacher commented, "We do math and reading in the morning when the kids are fresh. We do science and social studies, in the afternoon, if there is a chance" (pp. 2-21). And, the site visitors' requests to observe social studies lessons were sometimes met with responses such as, "You should have come yesterday, we're doing vocabulary today", "I'm not going to do any more social studies until after Christmas", or "Social studies? Uh, yeah, come back tomorrow" (p. 2-21).

Along the same lines, Denny (1978), in a suburb of Houston, had a 4th-grade teacher comment that "In the self-contained classroom teachers set their personal priorities and science and social studies turn out to be step-children" (p. 1-34). Another teacher pointed out that in her school, they had large social studies classes in order to allow small classes for reading and math; and an assistant principal suggested that an indicator of the low status of social

studies and science and an "unsure attitude" about them is the high number of films or filmstrips used in those classes (p. 1-35).

In a school district in rural Illinois, Peshkin (1978) had a teacher say, "I don't see [social studies] as a subject for which there's a need for evaluation or a formal textbook" (p. 4-55). And in a metropolitan community in the Pacific Northwest, Welch (1978) found that the district curriculum guide, which the teachers actually tended to ignore, recommended about 30 minutes of instruction a day for elementary school social studies (and for science), as contrasted to 90 minutes a day for language arts and 40 minutes for math. He found that in general "science and social studies are being largely ignored", with the attention to both "diminishing as the move for competency . . . and other demands grow" (p. 5-9).

The Content

But what about the content of elementary school social studies? Goodlad (1984) concluded that although there appeared to be "a firm place in the curriculum for English/language arts and mathematics, and considerable agreement on a common body of knowledge topics and skills to be taught, there appears to be much less certainty on the part of the schools, particularly at the elementary level, about either the importance of the social studies subjects or what should be taught in them" (p. 210). Goodlad's sketch of elementary school social studies provides a familiar synopsis:

> The curriculum at the elementary level was amorphous, particularly in the lower grades. Many first- and second-grade classes put together the themes of understanding self and others with discussion of the family and the community. There were more field trips—to community resources and facilities—than occurred later. The intent, apparently, was to begin close at hand, with oneself, and expand one's understanding of the immediate environment. By the third grade, children frequently were studying community needs such as health care and problems such as conservation of water. Some classes made forays into other cultures (Eskimo and Maori) or learned about the dependence of their community on

> other communities for certain foods, raw materials, and manufactured goods. The fourth grade often involved study of the early colonization and exploration of America, with accompanying use of maps and globes. By the fifth and sixth grades, the themes of history, geography, and civics made a strong appearance, mostly in the content of the growth and development of the United States but frequently with some attention to other countries.
>
> Asked to identify what they were endeavoring to teach, the teachers surveyed listed map skills quite consistently. Commonly, too, they listed such things as acquiring the ability to work in groups, skill in oral expression, facility in library use, understanding similarities among cultures, and an array of the more complex intellectual processes--forming hypotheses, making comparisons, understanding sequences, formulating generalizations and conclusions, and using imagination. (p. 210)

Goodlad did note that a wide range of textbooks and materials were used for elementary social studies. But he also observed that primary grade teachers "either . . . gave no tests [for social studies] or they depended on appraising students' understanding through oral questioning", an indication that they "tended not to view social studies as an important subject" (p. 211). When tests were given they "rarely required other than the recall and feedback of memorized information--multiple choice, true or false, matching like things, and filling in the missing words or phrases" (p. 212), although the use of essay-type questions was occasionally reported in the upper elementary grades.

Social studies, Goodlad found, was the subject least liked by upper elementary school students. He observed that the students' lack of enthusiasm might well be because, perhaps somewhat surprisingly, social studies was perceived by the students to be one of their most difficult subjects. He went on to note that "the topics commonly included in the social sciences [sic] appear as though they would be of great human interest. But something strange seems to have happened to them on the way to the classroom. The topics of study become removed from their intrinsically human character, reduced to the dates and places readers will recall memorizing for tests" (p. 212). Although interest in the

topics is high, interest in the social studies rendition of the topics is often low.

What else can we say about the content of social studies at the elementary school level? We know that although there is variety in the approaches of different teachers, social studies instruction tends to be textbook-focused at the elementary, as at the secondary, level (Shaver et al., 1980). And there is considerable evidence that the content of the texts is naive, lacking in realism, and overly positive toward "prevailing social institutions" and "social quiesience" (Anyon, 1978, p. 51); likely to be one-sided and unfair, paradoxically, because of the effort to "tell one narrative that offends no one" (White, 1988, p. 136); and, to a large extent, "redundant, superfluous, vacuous, and needlessly superficial" (Larkins, Hawkins, & Gilmore, 1987, p. 299). At the same time, teachers tend to see the textbooks as authoritative, and they "tend to rely on, and believe in, the textbook as the source of knowledge" (Shaver et al., 1980, p. 8). As McCutcheon (1981) observed for the 12 teachers in her study: They "believed they could trust textbooks, for they believed they had been written by experts" (p. 54).

Classroom Interactions

As Hahn (1985) remarked, and as has also been noted by Wiley (1977) and Weiss (1978), you will not find much of the New Social Studies in the classrooms. Moreover, interactions, as Wilen and White noted in a preliminary draft of their chapter on "Classroom Discourse and Interaction in Social Studies" for the Handbook of Research on Social Studies Teaching and Learning, are "vastly asymmetrical" (pp. 7, 54-55): The teacher holds and exercises the basic speaking rights. Moreover, the most prevalent type of discourse (a conclusion which will not surprise those familiar with the social studies literature) is recitation,

although there is some discussion as well (p. 10). The pattern of teacher initiation/question, student response, and teacher evaluation that we have come to expect from preschool through university instruction was found in primary social studies in studies by Mehan (1978, 1979, 1982) that Wilen and White reviewed (pp. 13-14). Similarly, they cited a study by Stodolsky, Ferguson, and Wimpelberg (1981) that indicated that "straight question and answer" best characterized the recitation in the 5th-grade social studies classrooms that they observed. Moreover, the frequency of questions is high—perhaps as many as 300 to 400 per day, with elementary school teachers in one study (Godbold, 1969) asking more questions than did secondary teachers (Wilen & White, in preparation, p. 26). And, making the matter of textbook content particularly crucial in the determination of what elementary social studies is, the questions are largely aimed at low cognitive level recall of textual material (p. 27). Herman (1977), too, found that the 14 5th-grade teachers in his sample "dominated [social studies] instruction with . . . 'Teacher lectures with questions' and 'Teacher questions-pupils answer'". The other two frequent activities were "Pupils recite" and "Pupils read and write" (p. 56).

Although students prefer discussion over recitation, it is used infrequently, in part because teachers and students alike often lack the necessary questioning skills (Wilen & White, in preparation, p. 53; also see Weiss, 1978). On the other hand, even though students tend not to find social studies particularly interesting, it should be kept in mind that they do not necessarily find their experiences with individual social studies teachers to be unpleasant. As Shaver, Davis, and Helburn (1980) noted, social studies teachers "like their students, and are interested in their well-being, personally and academically . . . [and] they tend to create a comfortable environment for

their students, and students often like their teachers" (p. 7). Or, as Stake and Easley (1978) observed: "The teachers . . . may or may not be authoritarian. Many were. Many were not, establishing a most friendly, or casual, or cooperative relationship with the youngsters". Significantly, however, "students were expected to respect a set of understandings that originated outside of themselves, that were validated by processes that they could only crudely approximate, that took on a value that was given by the specialist or in terms of its utility to people at large. The motivation for learning these things also was expected to be external" (p. 19:4).

The Need for Caution

Despite the dire picture of elementary school social studies that is commonly painted, one must be cautious about overgeneralizing. A major emphasis in the CSSE Executive Summary (Stake & Easley, 1978) is on the teacher as the key to the child's school experience. What social studies will be for a child depends largely on "what the child's teacher believes, knows, and does--and doesn't believe, doesn't know, and doesn't do" (p. 19-1), and there is clearly, as most of us know from our common experience, great variability among teachers. (Indeed, our common experience, even as elementary school students, is probably a fairly valid source of information about teaching practices. As Shaver et al. [1980, p. 17], Ponder [1979, p. 518], and Armento [1986, pp. 943-4] have noted, despite the New Social Studies and other innovative efforts, social studies instruction today is not much different than it was 20 or more years ago.)

As mentioned above, Lahnston and Nevins (1977, p. 583) saw considerable diversity in their CSSE Boston case study: Teachers ranged from ignoring social studies completely to instruction using the most recent trends in the area. And, Mary Lee Smith (1978) concluded from her CSSE observations that "when an

individual teacher was adequately trained and so inclined, instruction [in elementary social studies] could be excellent" (p. 2-21). She cited as examples a primary teacher who used a carefully developed teaching package to introduce children to society, including government and economics, through the newspaper, and a 6th-grade teacher who helped students to understand the functions of the three branches of government through an informational lecture followed by role-playing. Variability is particularly likely in social studies, as well as in science and math, according to Louis Smith (1978) in his CSSE report on a suburban school district in a large midwestern city, because, as one teacher remarked, at the elementary school level the social studies program in those areas is "'half discretionary' with the individual teacher" (p. 3-28). In Walker's (1978) CSSE case study of schools in metropolitan Boston, "the differences between the . . . social studies classes [he] observed emphasized again that the teacher is the 'magic ingredient'" (p. 11-47). He remarked, for example, on a unit based on "Roots" which grew out of the teacher's enthusiasm, with her sense of excitement conveyed to the students.

How Much Time on Social Studies?

There are other reasons for being cautious about our response to the question which Hahn (1985) posed: "How fares the social studies in elementary schools?" (p. 220), and in particular for not accepting too easily her answer, "Not well, especially in the primary grades." Not only is there variety in the social studies experiences provided by teachers, but it is likely that, particularly at the primary grades, the surveys generally underestimate the amount of actual instructional time devoted to social studies objectives. University social studies educators, especially at the secondary level where instruction is departmentalized, are used to thinking of discrete social studies

courses or at least, discrete units. Moreover, the unintended hidden curriculum effects in other classes, as well as in social studies, on the social studies goal of citizenship are often decried. The implications are not nearly as clearly negative as they might seem, however (Shaver, 1978), especially at the elementary and particularly the primary grade level.

As Shaver, Davis, and Helburn (1980) pointed out, the materials used for language arts and reading instruction often incorporate social studies topics, and elementary school teachers involve students in many cooperative group experiences that are pertinent to social studies participatory objectives. Stake and Easley (1978) also observed that "curricular materials in reading and language arts were often found to deal with social studies type content, e.g., stories about things like country and people. Elementary teachers also devoted a considerable amount of time and effort to activities that were 'social studies' in the sense of teaching social skills and attitudes" (p. 13-29). Similarly, Branson (1977) commented that elementary teachers often incorporate social studies content and concepts in their language arts, music, and art instruction (p. 594). Along the same lines, Hill-Burnett (1978), in her CSSE case study of an eastern middle-seaboard city, noted that "social studies [in the elementary schools] benefitted somewhat because of its use as content for the exercise of reading skills" (p. 9-3). An example comes from Peshkin's (1978) CSSE case study: A second grade teacher noted that "as social situations occur in any of our reading material, they are used for discussion. For example, there is a story on Washington, D. C. and what some group of kids are seeing there. I get out my maps and we locate the Capitol, Washington Monument, etc. I'll bring in my own books on the White House and they'll do picture looking. I'll also bring

in books from the library so kids learn there's different sources of information" (p. 4-55).

The Matter of Priorities

Then, too, there are value priorities at issue in deciding whether social studies is faring as well as it should in elementary schools. In the executive summary of the CSSE report, Stake and Easley (1978) remarked on the greater emphasis on reading and arithmetic as a result of minimum competency testing, with reduced emphasis on social studies (and science). They commented that "teachers were willing to make this trade-off, saying that youngsters would not understand complex ideas until they could read them. Teachers had been embarrassed far more by student inability to read or compute than by their inability to comprehend ideas" (p. 19:3). Shaver, Davis, and Helburn (1980, p. 7) also noted social studies teachers' acceptance, at the secondary as well as elementary level, of the importance of the basics, especially reading, and the resultant reduced attention to social studies, especially in the primary grades.

Despite the importance which social studies educators place on citizenship and content objectives, the teachers' commitment to the basics does make sense. Social studies instruction, especially given the heavy emphasis on textbooks, depends on the ability of students to read (Shaver et al., 1980, p. 10). In addition, those of us who teach at the university level often express concern over the inability of our students to write, and math skills are essential for survival in our society.

As a result of reflecting on these priorities, I often surprise people by saying that if there has to be a choice at the elementary level between reading, writing, and arithmetic on the one hand and social studies on the other, I opt for reading, writing, and arithmetic—the 3 Rs. There is time later for social

studies, and without the reading and writing foundation in particular, the effectiveness of that later instruction will be impeded. Would I rather have one of my children finish elementary school with good reading and writing skills, but without a great deal of social studies instruction; or would I rather have that child finish elementary school having spent a great deal of time with social studies, but deficient in reading, writing, and math? The answer seems obvious. Of course, casting the question in dichotomous either-or terms is unrealistic, although it is often stated that way. It is a matter of degree, of emphasis. Moreover, as indicated above, there may well be more social studies-related instruction going on than is indicated by the results from surveys.

Research Perspectives

In their Handbook manuscript, Wilen and White distinguished between research conducted from the "objective" perspective and that conducted from the "interpretive" perspective. Most of the findings mentioned above have come from the objective perspective, what I (and Fraenkel & Wallen, in preparation) would label the quantitative approach to research (van Manen's, 1975, empirical-analytic orientation), and were obtained through ratings or the systematic observation of classroom interactions. The interpretive research perspective, which encompasses researchers from a variety of orientations including anthropology, sociology, and sociolinguistics, is basically qualitative in nature (Goetz & LeCompte, in preparation). Ethnography is a primary interpretive methodology. Although the objective-quantitative perspective has given us general information on elementary social studies, research from the interpretive-qualitative perspective has promise of helping us to construct more meaningful characterizations of what goes on in classrooms.

The potential fruitfulness of interpretive-qualitative research is demonstrated by White's (1985) recent chapter on ethnographic research. For example, the effective teacher literature (see, e.g., Brophy & Good, 1986; Rosenshine & Stevens, 1986) has grown out of the objective-quantitative perspective. Although there are serious reasons to question the applicability to social studies of the structured approach to teaching prescribed in the effective teacher literature (e.g., Shaver, 1988), it is still advocated for instruction across the board. An excellent illustration of the insights to be gained from interpretive-qualitative research is presented by White's review of a case study by Edelsky, Draper, and Smith (1983). They described a teacher who "violated most of the research literature findings on what effective teachers are supposed to do," (p. 288), yet had outstanding success with sixth graders in a school in which the students were largely from ethnic minorities, standardized reading scores were more than a year and a half below grade level, and one-third of the students had failed at least one grade by the sixth grade.

The Student

Even with the new qualitative approaches, however, an essential element of what happens in elementary school social studies is largely missing from our research: That is, as noted above, knowledge of how the student is reacting to and constructing his or her ongoing experiences. White (1985) argued that

> the mere presence or absence of an instructional strategy is not sufficient to establish what type of academic work may be occurring in a classroom. Whether students learn that the doing of academic work is externally or internally controlled; whether students learn that displays of their personal knowledge are for fun and reward for hard work or for furthering class learning; or whether they gain positive or negative visions of what will be required of them in second grade or at Harvard--the meaning of a classroom procedure as simple as show-and-tell must be inferred from an analysis of the actual classroom interactions and the timing, intonation, and exact working of the teachers' reactions. (p. 248)

I would add that the true meaning of what happens in the classroom cannot be discovered without more careful attention to the students' reactions.

In a paper on law-related education in elementary schools (Shaver, 1979), I used our difficulties in understanding the human body as a metaphor for our limited insights into schooling. Not only do researchers face a difficult task in determining the workings of the human body and its ailments, but as individuals we have amazingly limited knowledge of what is happening within our own bodies. In fact, we rarely have any perception of how our vital parts are working and only become aware of them in the case of inadequate performance or discomfort. Even then, discerning the source of the complaint can be an extremely difficult task, one which we are often not able to accomplish ourselves and which sometimes cannot be accomplished in time for treatment (remediation) with even the most sophisticated technology.

Similarly, much of what goes on in classrooms, especially in the minds and hearts of the children, is hidden from our immediate awareness. When we try to understand what is happening, the most important elements often lie beyond our observational powers. Consider a child from a home where blatant racism is the mode: What <u>really</u> is going on in that child's mind as he or she sits expressionless while the teacher talks about the importance of treating all people equally?

I am reminded of a little study during the Harvard Project (Oliver & Shaver, 1966) that was never reported. While doing student teaching as part of my Master of Arts in Teaching program at Harvard, one supervisor constantly focused attention on how many students had their hands up—which he clearly considered an indicator of student interest and involvement. We decided to test his "hypothesis" that such apparent signs of attentiveness were related to

learning. An observation booth with a one-way screen had been constructed for observing student discussions. We used it for observing teacher-led discussions. Because there were only about 12 to 13 students in each group, it was easy to scan the group once every two minutes or so and give each student a rating on a rough involvement scale from "great involvement" (such as being actively engaged in interaction with the teacher) to "extreme disengagement" (such as staring out the window or being absorbed in doodling). Our analysis of the data indicated very little correlation between student attentiveness scores and scores on classroom-type tests.

An investigative orientation is needed that will lead us to inquire of students what they are thinking and how they are reacting, cognitively and affectively, during classroom experiences. Only then will an adequate meaning of elementary social studies be available.

Of course, gaining that meaning poses considerable, perhaps insurmountable, methodological challenges. Although research in which the students' thoughts and reactions during instruction are assessed has been conducted at the college level (McKeachie, 1963), I am not aware of any at the elementary school level. That scarcity may be due in part to the greater difficulty of having young children capture their own meanings to be conveyed later to the researcher.

Of course, in all of our seeking to understand what goes on in elementary school social studies, it is not sufficient just to describe what is happening in classrooms. The ultimate concern must be with student outcomes: What are the links between classroom and other curricular happenings and student learning, especially in regard to the complex, long-range goals of a curricular area committed to citizenship education? The challenge of answering that question has been posed in chapters on social studies in the three Handbooks of Research

on Teaching (Armento, 1986; Metcalf, 1963; Shaver & Larkins, 1973) and will be a persistent theme in the forthcoming Handbook of Research on Social Studies Teaching and Learning.

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Table 1

Time Reported Spent on Social Studies Instruction
by Elementary School Teachers

Author	Primary Grades		Upper Grades		K-6	
	Min./Day	Hr./Wk.	Min./Day	Hr./Wk.	Min./Day	Hr./Wk.
Weiss (1978)	21	1.8	34	2.8	25	2.1
Goodlad (1984)	25	2.1	40	3.3	32	2.7
Cawelti & Adkisson (1985)	—	—	—	—	34	2.8